



## THE PHYSICIAN'S *Bookshelf*

**HOW TO REDUCE SURELY AND SAFELY**—Herbert Pollack, M.D., McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., New York, 1955. 157 pages, \$2.95.

With the current fad for losing weight in full swing, any "How To" book with the word "Reduce" or "Diet" in it stands a good chance of getting on the best-seller list today. Unfortunately, too many of the books which are published are written by quacks and fakes. Such is not the case with the author of "How To Reduce Surely and Safely." Dr. Pollack writes with far more soundness than most of the health-fad writers. He has an excellent chapter which points up the fallacies of diet fads and fakes. There are also appendices which list calorie values and low-calorie menus.

However, he sometimes falls into the very pitfalls for which he rightfully criticizes the quack, and he writes too much in their style, with an assumption of exactness that is often unjustified. He has a pet phraseology, with repetition of such phrases as "Your Safe and Sure Diet," which is rather offensive to the medical reader. He describes as gospel certain probabilities such as "If you weigh 10 per cent less than your desirable weight you are underweight." On page 53 he states with pontifical authority, "You should consume one-fourth to one-third of your total calories at breakfast. Otherwise fatigue, irritability, dizziness, nausea and headache can take over about midmorning." And, immediately after that he would dispel wide-spread myths about breakfast. He includes diets up to 3,000 calories in his reducing diets—originally based on an assumption that every individual is like every other individual in his utilization of energy—except that he falls into a rigid classification of light workers vs. heavy and moderately heavy workers (pages 58 and 59).

The book concerns physicians only as reading which may be of interest to his patients. On the whole it can be recommended as a handy little book which is better than most as a self-service guide to reduction of weight.

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**CARDIAC PRESSURES AND PULSES—A Manual of Right and Left Heart Catheterization**—Aldo A. Luisada, M.D., Associate Professor of Medicine; and Chi Kong Liu, M.D., Instructor of Medicine; both of The Chicago Medical School, Grune & Stratton, Inc., New York, 1956. 116 pages, \$6.00.

After a brief introductory chapter on the events of the cardiac cycle the authors discuss the technic of cardiac catheterization, normal pressure patterns of the heart and great vessels, abnormal pressure patterns and artifacts. A concluding chapter presents formulas commonly employed in the calculations of blood flow, shunts, resistances and valve areas. A brief bibliography and an adequate index has been prepared.

However, the monograph is generally disappointing. Despite the publisher's advertisements stating that it reflects the authors' "extensive experience with cardiac catheterization," the material presented is limited. Much of the data

has been obtained from the literature, many pressure curves from dogs are illustrated, diagrams are used where actual pressure curves would serve better, and human material is scanty. For example, their data on the normal pressure curves is derived from studies on only 7 humans and 6 dogs. Only one pressure tracing from the left atrium of the human subject is presented. The published tracings will be unfamiliar to most workers since heart sounds without simultaneous electrocardiograms are used for identification of pressure curves and pressure measurements are not indicated. Many will disagree with the authors' contention that a photographic recorder tracing simultaneous reference heart sounds is superior to a direct writer with a reference electrocardiogram for pressure recordings. Despite the authors' discussion of artifacts many of their tracings are seriously damped and should not have been published. The discussion of the events of the cardiac cycle is excellent and provides a proper introduction to any volume on pressure pulses. There is a distinct need for a monograph on this subject. This volume only partially fulfills that need and workers in the field must still turn to published papers and their own files for information on the normal and abnormal pressure pulses.

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**CHRISTOPHER'S TEXTBOOK OF SURGERY—Sixth Edition**—Edited by Loyal Davis, M.D., Chairman of the Department of Surgery, Northwestern University Medical School. W. B. Saunders Company, Philadelphia, 1956. 1484 pages, 1359 illustrations on 716 figures, \$15.50.

Dr. Loyal Davis and 86 other distinguished authorities have revised the long-famous Christopher's Textbook of Surgery. For the new sixth edition the work has been completely reorganized and almost all chapters have been completely rewritten in an effort to bring the material up-to-date and along more practical lines. Every common surgical disease is considered under etiology, pathology, clinical course, diagnosis, treatment, techniques, pre and postoperative care, complications and prognosis. The factual content of the book is tremendous.

The book suffers from the same disadvantages as its predecessors, however, for it is too long and complicated for the student, yet inadequate for the practicing clinician, for its emphasis is as a standard textbook. The integration of the material is rather well-done, but it is difficult to unify into one work the concepts of 86 different contributors, each anxious to completely develop his chosen field of discussion.

New material predominates throughout the book. The vascular system, endocrine system, chemotherapy, treatment of soft tissue injuries and burns, preoperative and postoperative care are discussed in a thoroughly modern fashion, differing from many other books. The illustrations are new and good, and have been carefully selected.

This is a good standard textbook of surgery, and can be recommended for students ultimately headed into surgery, general practitioners with a surgical interest, and surgeons.